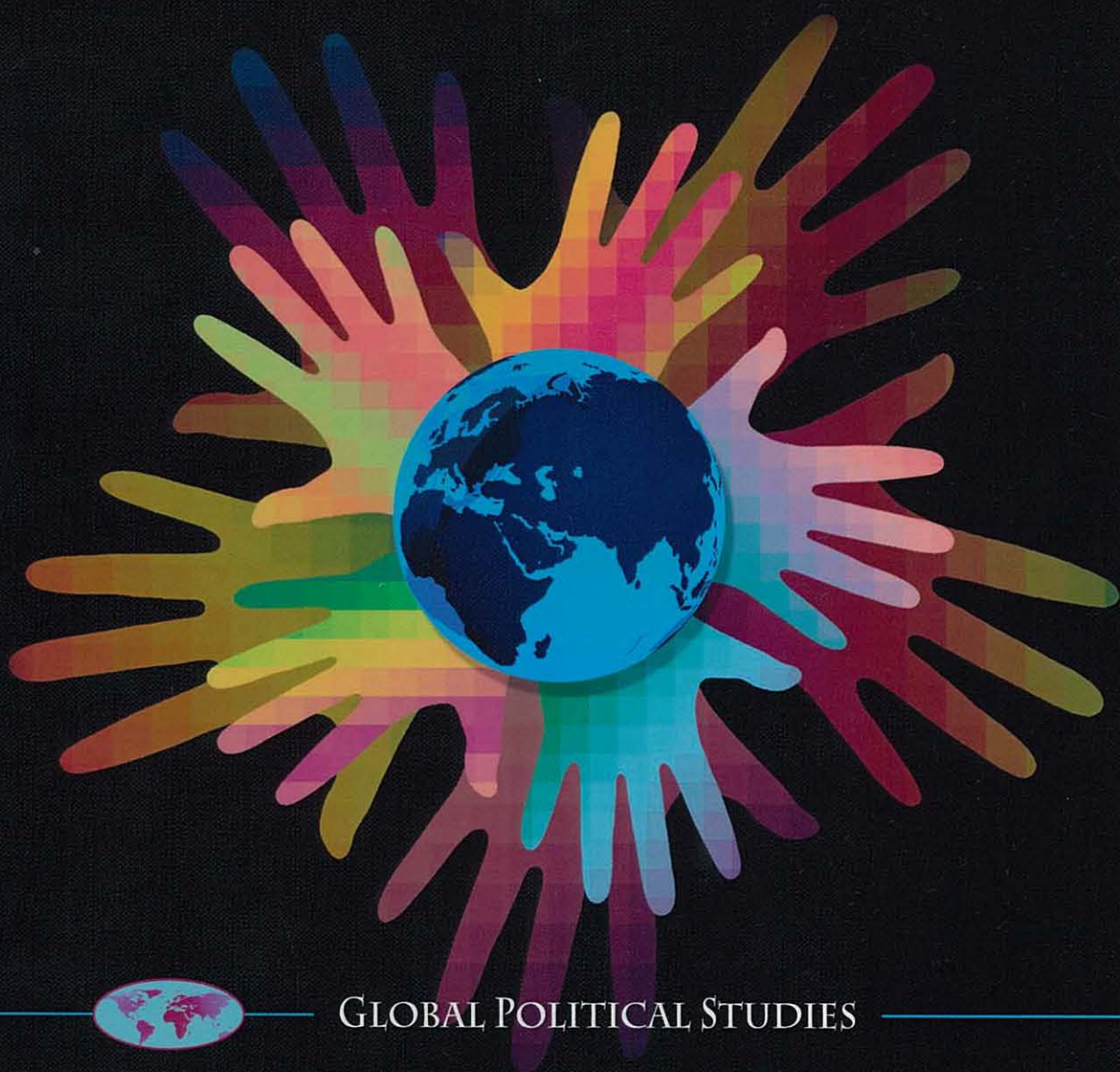


HURRIYET BABACAN ♦ PETER HERRMANN
EDITORS

NATION STATE AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY



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NATION STATE AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

HURRIYET BABACAN
AND
PETER HERRMANN
EDITORS



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CONTENTS

Acknowledgments		vii
Chapter 1	Introduction <i>Peter Herrmann and Hurriyet Babacan</i>	1
Chapter 2	The State As Mechanism of Exclusion: Nationhood, Citizenship, Ethnicity <i>Peter Herrmann and Hurriyet Babacan</i>	5
Chapter 3	Nation State, Social Cohesion and Cultural Diversity <i>Hurriyet Babacan and Peter Herrmann</i>	19
Chapter 4	State, Democracy and Ethnicity in the Global Political Economy <i>Dunja Larise</i>	37
Chapter 5	Nation State and Diversity in Australia <i>Alperhan Babacan</i>	57
Chapter 6	India: A Country Report <i>Narayan Gopalkrishnan</i>	71
Chapter 7	Sweden: From an Ethnic Homogenous to a Heterogeneous Society <i>Bodil Erikson</i>	83
Chapter 8	How Brazil and Bolivia are Moving from National to Plurinational States <i>Felipe Arocena</i>	101
Chapter 9	Challenges to Multiculturalism in the Canadian Experience: A Consideration of Alternative Approaches to Dealing with Diversity <i>Grace-Edward Galabuzi</i>	115
Chapter 10	Germany: Migration, Islam and the Question of National Identity <i>Götz Nordbruch</i>	149

Conclusion	<i>Hurriyet Babacan and Peter Herrmann</i>	169
Contributors and Editors		173
Index		175

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Following from here both of the editors would like to pay their respects to the traditional owners, custodians and ancestors of this Australian land and acknowledge the spiritual relationship of all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people with their country and their cultural values and beliefs.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

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With the processes of globalisation, we are more than ever confronted with the paradoxes inherent in modern statehood. The characteristics of modern statehood are: (1) securing freedom from feudal oppression or despotism, (2) legislating for equality among citizens, (3) focusing on inclusion to incorporate the previously excluded into the system and finally, of the utmost importance, (4) establishing the principle of individualism as a primary goal.

Considering individualism as a primary goal produces the core paradox of modern statehood. The state, in various traditions of contractualist approaches and also with an emphasis on idealism, as for instance the Kantian approach of 'pure reason' or the Hegelian 'absolute idea' for producing the highest social order, actually lost the social dimension by translating it into an appendage of the individual. Moreover, the individual was both the elementary form, which supposedly gave rise to the state and also the ultimate goal of the state by way of defining individual freedom and development as the highest form of existence. The problem is that the nation state, being based on inclusion, is also by definition based on the principle of exclusion by both the definition of external borders and the definition of lines of internal separation and segregation.

The social construct of ethnicity gives rise to a second paradox. Ethnicity is also a theoretical construct, as characterised by Marx in the Introduction to his *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1843–44). It develops as a material force if and when it grips the masses. Logically, any such construct as ethnicity is exclusive to the extent on which it depends on otherness. From another perspective, the definition of ethnicity is negative – 'not he or she' or 'not they'. Positive definitions occasionally appear, suggesting a certain identity as a point of reference, but this can be hardly taken as truth when the positive angle is a constructed one, drawing its 'objective legitimation' at best from the historically based hegemonic character of the construct.

The erection of hegemonic structures to deal with these issues and also with the confrontation with shifting borders is at the core of this book. It is by no means a new and

exceptional phenomenon. On the contrary, it is a permanent feature and it gains special denotation when two particular developments occur. The first is a more or less fundamental change in the mode of production and the second is a consequent significant reordering of power relationships on a global scale. In the aftermath, national hegemonies are also in danger of being broken up.

We must also consider major waves of migration. Both push and pull forces have to be seen in the light of major shifts in the mode of production: (1) changes in the technical structure of production, resulting not least in huge effects on the metabolism of human beings and organic nature; (2) changes in the mode of production, which is the social organisation of productive processes, including the relevant power structures; and (3) changes to the global structures of production, (productive) consumption and social attributions.

In all cases, it is important to note that we are dealing with socio-natural processes. In referring to production, we should actually refer to production and reproduction. The point of departure is Engels' statement:

According to the materialistic conception, the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of the immediate essentials of life. This, again, is of a twofold character. On the one side, the production of the means of existence, of articles of food and clothing, dwellings, and of the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species (Engels, 1884).¹ Moving further, we can highlight the fact that the hegemonic structures erected on this foundation are always social manifestations, caught in a contradiction. On the one hand they claim to be a matter of reason, which from the philosophical perspective is the celebration of the Kantian imperative of 'pure reason'. On the other hand, every 'pure reason', once acquiring hegemonic status, claims acknowledgement not just as dominant but moreover as unique.

Having said that national hegemonies might be in danger of being broken up is problematic as it implies that the conferred hegemony and its underlying constructs (ethnicity, religious dominance, role and status of groups etc.) are actually justified, 'given' and even 'natural'. A metaphorical proof of a 'natural' construct can be taken from the term 'naturalisation', which defines the acquisition of citizenship and nationality other than on the grounds of birth. An important reason for producing this book is a strong rejection of any such notion. And indeed, the contributions show both the similarity of the topics and the variety of answers given to the common challenges. The challenges arise from the discrepancy between the different layers of societal integration, namely the prevailing thinking in national frameworks in a globalising world, which limits the answers on international negotiations and agreements. This could also be expressed as mechanisms being out of time to the same degree that people are getting out of place. This is not to say that time and space lose meaning. On the contrary, we see that in many cases they even gain meaning by reclaiming it. However, the conditions are different. In several cases the criteria for belonging are redefined – and this is obviously a matter that involves 'decisions' by different parties. And it is obvious that both the character of the decisions (are they consciously,

¹ Engels, F. (1884). *Origins of the family, private property, and the state*. Preface to the first edition. <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/preface.htm> (accessed 5 May 2011). Online version: Marx/Engels Internet Archive (marxists.org) 1993, 1999, 2000, Volume 26. Frederick Engels 1882-89.

strategically taken, are they just about toleration of some form of general practice?) and the character of the parties involved (which may be official institutions, public bodies, the 'general public' or organised groups) play different roles.

One highly important although by no means conclusively defined aspect is the blurring of borders and boundaries in conjunction with increasingly strict closures. Thus, the contributions to this book may also be read as contributions along the line of tension between 'gated communities' and the open global village. The question *quo vadis?* gains a twofold meaning. It is asking where people actually go, where and why they move and where they find some kind of belonging. And the question is also about frames and gains. Where are moves allowed and how is moving allowed and what are the expected outcomes for the different actors? One point can be made at the outset: we have to start from here – this hugely tensional question. And there is a long way to go until we arrive at a position which allows all of us to feel – at least for some time – comfortable in the global village.